

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 are pending, claim 10 having been amended in this response.

112, 2nd Paragraph, Rejections

Claims 1-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite.

The claim language “copolymer having a multi-layer structure” was rejected as allegedly not being recognized terminology in the art and unclear with respect to the metes and bounds of the claims. Applicants traverse this rejection. Applicants point to the specification, page 8, line 24 – page 9, line 25, for example, which describes this copolymer. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the language is definite. Applicants would be happy to clarify this further with the Examiner.

Claim 10 has been amended to change the multiple dependency language.

The rejections are believed to have been overcome. Withdrawal thereof is respectfully requested.

103(a) Rejections

Claims 1-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Akao (USP 6,013,723) or Wanat (USP 5,063,259) or Wanat in view of Akao. Applicants traverse the rejections.

Claim 1 is directed to a (meth)acrylic resin composition comprising 100 parts by weight of a methyl methacrylate polymer obtained by suspension polymerizing 50 to 100 % by weight of methyl methacrylate and 50 to 0 % by weight of a monomer copolymerizable therewith, 1 to 200 parts by weight of a copolymer having a multi-layer structure, and 0.02 to 10 parts by weight of a fatty acid metallic salt. The (meth)acrylic resin composition of embodiments of the present invention may advantageously inhibit the problems of thermal degradation and discoloration at processing associated with a conventional (meth)acrylic resin composition obtained by a suspension method. By containing the specific amount of the claimed fatty acid metallic salt, thermal degradation at processing may be inhibited and, as a result, discoloration controlled in the (meth)acrylic resin composition of embodiments of the present invention.

In contrast, Akao neither teaches nor suggests the claimed composition, in which the methyl methacrylate polymer is obtained by suspension polymerization. Rather, Akao discloses an injection molded article for a photosensitive material. In Akao, the thermoplastic resin, e.g., poly(methyl methacrylate), is one that is polymerized with a specific single-site catalyst and that has a molecular-weight distribution of narrow range. Hence, the polymerization method of Akao

is different from that of Applicants' invention. As such, the different catalyst and compounding agent of Akao may result in a residue in the obtained polymer that is different from Applicants' invention. Moreover, Akao discloses that a fatty acid metal salt may be used, for example, to maintain the photographic property of photosensitive material by neutralizing a halide compound in the resin. See, e.g., Akao, col. 20, ll. 14-29. Therefore, one skilled in the art would not know from Akao about the problem associated with suspension polymerization or how containing the specific amount of a fatty acid metallic salt would solve the problem, as in Applicants' invention.

Accordingly, claim 1 and its dependent claims are believed to be patentable over Akao. Withdrawal of the rejections is therefore requested.

Wanat discloses, as described in the background section of the present specification, (meth)acrylic resin preferably polymerized by bulk polymerization of methyl methacrylate monomer. See, e.g., Wanat, col. 3, ll. 36-41. As such, Wanat does not consider the problem associated with suspension polymerization or how containing the specific amount of a fatty acid metallic salt would solve the problem, as in Applicants' invention. Moreover, the Office Action concedes that Wanat does not disclose the species of fatty acid metal salts. Rather, Wanat merely discloses the genus lubricants. Therefore, one skilled in the art would not know from Wanat to pick the species fatty acid metal salts from among the numerous lubricants available.

Accordingly, claim 1 and its dependent claims are believed to be patentable over Wanat. Withdrawal of the rejections is therefore requested.

Furthermore, there would be no motivation to modify Wanat to replace its lubricants with the fatty acid metal salt of Akao because Wanat neither teaches nor suggests the benefit of using a fatty acid metal salt to inhibit thermal degradation and thereby control discoloration in a suspension polymerization. Such a teaching is found only in Applicants' disclosure.

Accordingly, claim 1 and its dependent claims are believed to be patentable over Wanat in view of Akao. Withdrawal of the rejections is therefore requested.

CONCLUSION

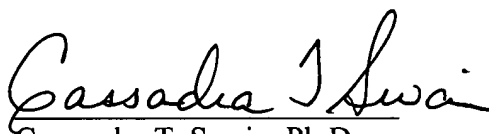
The claims are believed to be allowable. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned to discuss any issue regarding this application.

The Office is authorized to charge any fees under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 or 1.17 or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Cassandra T. Swain".

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Date: March 14, 2006

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